



TOWN OF BROOKLINE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Health Advisory: Brookline Reservoir Restricted Due to Algae Bloom

A public health advisory has been issued for the Brookline Reservoir due to a confirmed bloom of blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria. Based on Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) analysis of testing, it appears that the Brookline Reservoir is experiencing a harmful algae bloom. These blooms may produce toxins that can make people and pets sick. Reservoir visitors are urged to avoid contact with the water and any areas of algae concentration, even on shore.

The reservoir is temporarily restricted until further notice. Reservoir visitors shall not:

- **Fish in the water (swimming and boating are never allowed).**
- **Allow dogs to swim in or drink the water.**

In the event that you, your child or your dog comes in contact with the water or an algae bloom, rinse off immediately.

Blue-green algae can form harmful blooms in lakes, ponds, and rivers that make the water murky, and can sometimes make the water look like pea soup or paint. The current suspected bloom (as of 7/30/15) in the Reservoir appears like a dull green discoloration.

For humans, the primary concern is ingestion of water that contains significant levels of blue-green algae while swimming. Direct skin contact with blue-green algae and inhalation of water droplets containing blue-green algae or toxins can also cause symptoms. Individuals who think they may be experiencing these or other symptoms after touching Reservoir water should call their health care provider.

Contact may cause skin and eye irritation, and inhalation can cause respiratory irritation and exacerbate pre-existing respiratory conditions. Toxins are not absorbed through the skin. Ingestion of a significant amount of blue-green algae can cause acute gastrointestinal symptoms,

such as vomiting and diarrhea. If the blue-green algae are producing toxin(s), the health effects can be more serious, especially for children and small pets due to their smaller body weights. Ingestion of a significant amount of toxin can cause acute gastrointestinal distress and, depending on the specific toxin, can affect the functioning of the liver, kidneys, and/or neurological systems and in severe cases can result in death.

For dogs, the primary concern is the ingestion of water containing blue-green algae or scum that has washed ashore or gotten onto their skin or fur.

Call your veterinarian immediately if your dog has been around an algae bloom and shows symptoms such as vomiting, staggering, drooling, or convulsions. These symptoms present themselves fairly quickly after exposure. Animals of most concern are dogs. They have been known to eat the scum that washes ashore and/or lick scum out of their fur. In Massachusetts and in many other states, canine fatalities have been documented due to the ingestion of harmful algae.

When will this advisory be lifted?

Algae blooms may last for weeks in the summer, or may disappear quite quickly. On Tuesday, July 28th, staff from Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) took water samples from the Brookline Reservoir for analysis, which was completed on Thursday, July 30th.

The Brookline Public Health Department and Brookline Parks and Open Space Division will continue to review state sampling results for the presence of a visible algae bloom in the Brookline Reservoir over the coming weeks. Water sampling will occur at least weekly while the algae bloom persists, and for several weeks after it is no longer visible. MDPH recommends that the water advisory not be lifted until two consecutive weekly samples show algal cell counts below the safe limit of 70,000 cells/milliliter of water.

For more information, call the Brookline Health Department at (617) 730-2300.

Please visit the [MA Department of Public Health](#), [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [US EPA](#) websites for more information on blue-green algae blooms.